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Union boss lashes Lambie with foul-mouthed rant

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Ben Schneiders

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The comments, recorded at a meeting of union activists on Thursday, are Mr Setka's first since Sen-

ator Lambie vowed to vote for the government's Ensuring Integrity Bill if he did not stand down.

"In the end who the f--- is a politician to tell a union secretary or any

union official who the f--- is going to run the joint or not? When the f--- is that happening?" Mr Setka said.

In a leaked recording from the Melbourne meeting, Mr Setka accused ACTU President Michele O'Neil of undermining him and vowed to target cross-bench politicians with a big-spending campaign

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Setka lashes senator for speaking out on meeting

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if they vote for the Coalition's proposed union-busting legislation.

Senator Lambie last week called Mr Setka a "bloody meathead" and said she was close to convincing him to quit after cooking him a roast lamb at her house in Tasmania.

Of that meeting, Mr Setka said: "It was all meant to be a f---ing secret and she f---ing blabbed."

He insisted it was wrong for Senator Lambie to link his future to the passage of the government's legislation: "She's thrown it at my feet. It's got f--- all to do with me. And in the end I said, 'You're the one who

has got to vote for it.'"

Mr Setka also insisted Senator Lambie had not guaranteed to vote against the bill even if he did resign. "I said to her, 'Then if I stepped down would the Integrity Bill go through?' and she said, 'There's no guarantees in life,'" the union leader told the meeting.

Senator Lambie denied this, saying, "If John's under this impression then his memory is as cooked as his reputation".

Mr Setka said he did not know why Senator Lambie had taken a position against him but added, "We've been told (ACTU President) Michele O'Neil has been winding her up."

Ms O'Neil responded saying, "In every public and private conversation I've had with crossbench senators - including Jacqui Lambie - I have always said that regardless of your view of John Setka, the Bill needs to be opposed because it will hurt every working person and every union."

In the shop stewards' meeting, Mr Setka took aim at other crossbenchers, including Centre Alliance senators Rex Patrick and Stirling Griff, saying if they voted for the Coalition's Ensuring Integrity Bill, the union would make them pay.

"I said (to Senator Lambie) 'Listen, if them f---ing other crossbenchers want to f---ing vote for this Integrity Bill, let em' f---ing vote for it but they will wear the consequences of it. The money we are saving by not giving to the ALP, we will start a f---ing campaign.'"

In 20 years time when the Centre Alliance Senators were walking down the street they could expect to be abused, he said.

"Someone is going to point the finger and say, 'There's them f---ers that voted for that Bill that f---ed up not just construction workers but all workers in Australia.'"

"She was a bit shocked by that. You can only f--- around ... with these people for so long."

The leaking of Mr Setka's com-

ments are embarrassing for the union leader who has already appointed a former homicide detective to hunt down previous leaks.

The Coalition's Bill has been criticised by the Queensland Law Society as having "extremely broad" grounds for disqualifying union officials. International Trade Union Confederation secretary Sharan Burrow said the bill was undemocratic and part of a government vendetta against workers.

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Setka unleashes spray at Lambie

EXCLUSIVE

Ben Schneiders

Construction union leader John Setka has attacked the credibility of independent senator Jacqui Lambie, belligerently refused to quit his job and claimed that ACTU president Michele O'Neil was undermining him behind the scenes.

The comments, on a tape leaked from a meeting of several hundred union activists on Thursday, are Mr Setka's first since Senator Lambie vowed to vote for the government's Ensuring Integrity Bill if he did not stand down. Mr Setka said at the meeting in Melbourne: "In the end who the f--- is a politician to tell a union secretary or any union official who the f--- is going to run the joint or not? When the f--- is that happening?"

The controversial unionist also vowed to target the seats of crossbench politicians with a big-spending campaign if they vote for the Coalition's proposed union-busting legislation.

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Defiant: union leader John Setka.

Defiant Setka unleashes foul-mouthed spray at

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secret and she f---ing blabbed." Mr Setka also said he'd met Senator Lambie a second time, during which he had taken her up in a crane on a Melbourne building site. At both meetings she had told him to step down, he said.

But he insisted it was wrong for Senator Lambie to link his future to the passage of the government's legislation: "She's thrown it at my feet. It's got f---all to do with me. And in the end I said, 'You're the one who has got to vote for it.'"

Mr Setka also insisted Senator Lambie had not guaranteed to vote

against the bill even if he did resign. "I said to her, 'Then if I stepped down would the integrity bill go through?' and she said, 'There's no guarantees in life'," the union leader told the meeting.

Senator Lambie denied this, saying, "If John's under this impression then his memory is as cooked as his reputation."

Mr Setka said he did not know why Senator Lambie had taken a position against him, but added: "We've been told [ACTU president] Michele O'Neil has been winding her up."

Ms O'Neil responded, saying: "In every public and private con-

versation I've had with crossbench senators - including Jacqui Lambie - I have always said that regardless of your view of John Setka, the bill needs to be opposed because it will hurt every working person and every union."

Mr Setka joked that it was not due to his prolific swearing that Senator Lambie wanted him to stand down. He claimed the senator had said "f---" more than 200 times in a five-minute car trip from her house to the airport in Tasmania, and "f---" and "c---" "45 times" over lunch.

"I knew it was not about the f---ing swearing," he said.

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Porter elbows out Frydenberg to become Morrison's most likely successor

Author : Dennis Atkins

Scott Morrison appears untouchable in Canberra's power corridors. He's won an election against all odds, has a two-thirds party room vote to firewall his leadership, and he dominates polls and the parliament.

In just about any other world that would be the end of the matter, but this is politics -- and conversations in this sphere are driven by ambition, scheming and an endless game of "what if?". That's why some in Liberal Party ranks have already been asking the question "who's next?". It's a game that's presenting intriguing outcomes.

After the election, everyone assumed the new order was Morrison first, daylight second and the prime minister's deputy Josh Frydenberg third. The member for Kooyong, as hard work and ambitious as they come, just had to sit and wait. Now, he better sharpen up as he's got a competitor hot on his heels. Western Australian Liberal Christian Porter is the guy turning most heads in Canberra for a variety of reasons.

Porter is one of the most senior ministers -- carrying responsibilities for the law as attorney-general and taking on unions in his industrial relations portfolio -- and he's in the leadership group as leader of the government in the House of Representatives. This broad range of responsibilities allows him to shine and that's just what he's been doing.

Porter is Western Australian Liberal Party royalty in every sense of the word. His father, Charles or simply "Chilla", ran the division for almost two decades from the high rolling 1970s, and his handsome, whipsmart son was regarded as a potential leader from his time as a high-profile Perth lawyer 25 years ago.

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The younger Porter went straight into Colin Barnett's cabinet after his election to the state parliament in 2008 where he stayed for just four years, handling the demanding roles of attorney-general and treasurer. After his election to the federal seat of Pearce in the big Liberal win of 2013, Porter cooled his heels until Malcolm Turnbull gave him an arm chair ride into Cabinet handling social security.

Now back in his comfort zone of chief law officer, Porter is showing he relishes his workload, and provides the star quality otherwise missing from Morrison's team. On the legislative front, Porter has worked his way around the religious freedom laws, something with more tripwires than anything we've seen since the 18C free speech battle his predecessor George Brandis found too hard five years ago. Porter has also crafted new industrial laws -- the Ensuring Integrity Act -- which form both a bludgeon to use against the unions, and a neat wedge to isolate the Labor opposition. He still has to navigate a legislative victory on this front, but he's hopeful. In parliament, Porter has been quick on his feet, going from defence to attack with agility and intellect. He does this while deploying the rarest of political skills in the modern era: genuine humour.

Where Porter's ability is best seen is in his role as the government's chief parliamentary tactician, the leader of the house. His score against his Labor counterpart, Tony Burke, is entirely lopsided, as his mastery of standing orders demonstrated during this week's intense battle over Victorian Liberal backbencher Gladys Liu's interviewing skills, political doings and fundraising.

Even in this matter, Porter showed he was able to go on the attack without stepping in the bear traps all over the place. When Porter had to shut down a Labor move to debate the Liu matter, he used Liberal Party history for protection and ammunition.

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"Earlier this week we had a condolence [motion] for the last living member of

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the Menzies Government (Jim Forbes), who helped unravel the White Australia Policy, and all these years later this is where we are,” Porter said.

“The fundamental proposition that [Labor] are putting is that a Chinese Australian, with a wonderful heritage, who overcame domestic violence, who came to this country, who came to this country and has natural associations with Chinese organisations, by virtue of those associations is not a fit and proper person to be here.”

Porter’s colleagues are watching him closely and like what they see.

“Christian is everything we look for in a future leader while Josh (Frydenberg), while hardworking, is seen as too close to the boss [Morrison],” said one Liberal MP.

“Josh is looking like a mini-me while Christian is very much his own man.”

Dennis Atkins is a freelance writer based in Brisbane where he was a national political editor during the Howard Government. He is filling in for part of the time while Bernard Keane is enjoying a break.

